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ABSTRACT

Pertinent problems are identified which act as deterrents in providing effective program coordination and articulation in occupational education. Also identified are some procedures currently being used to improve this situation and specific recommendations which should assist in solving problems that exist. The document proposes: (1) that all institutions submit a plan of articulation to the State Board of Education by a specified date; (2) that two demonstration projects on program articulation be funded through the Legislature; (3) that institutional role statements be developed at the local level; (4) that efforts continue toward the reorganization of community college districts and; (5) that emphasis should be given within the State Department of Education to ensure a uniform effort in encouraging horizontal and vertical coordination and articulation. (SH)

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Planning for Continuous Occupational Education Programs Between Secondary and Postsecondary Education

Michigan Department of Education

FOREWORD

The State Board of Education and Department of Education staff need to continually assume a leadership role in providing for dynamic instructional programming. This leadership role should include the responsibility of bringing about improved planning in terms of program articulation between secondary and postsecondary institutions. Similar articulation must also exist between community colleges and baccalaureate institutions, both public and private.

This document identifies some pertinent problems which act as a deterrent in providing effective program coordination and articulation in occupational education. It also identifies some procedures currently being used to improve this situation and includes specific recommendations which should assist in solving problems that exist. The problems of articulation are not confined to occupational education, but in the interest of finalizing action on the recommendation, this paper will not address similar concerns in general education.

Educational leaders at the local level must have a commitment to articulation if the process is to succeed since changes will come about when people have a willingness to share ideas, plans and activities.

The document proposes: (1) That all institutions submit a plan of articulation to the State Board of Education by September, 1976; (2) that two demonstration projects on program articulation be funded through the Legislature; (3) that institutional role statements be developed at the local level; (4) that efforts continue toward the reorganization of community college districts and; (5) that emphasis should be given within the State Department of Education to ensure a uniform effort in encouraging horizontal and vertical coordination and articulation. The Legislature will also be requested to fund a study for the purpose of identifying those institutional policies which require replication of learning experiences at a cost of time and money to the student and/or taxpayer.

JOHN W. PORTER
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

February, 1975

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CHAPTER I

ARTICULATION: WHAT IS IT?

Nearly everyone concerned with education and those who have some responsibility for administration of educational programming agree that program articulation is essential among all institutions involved in the educational effort. Despite this, the fact remains that program articulation does not always exist and in many instances may be ineffective and non-productive.

Much has been written about articulation, but in many of these articles and in many discussions, workshops or other communicative efforts designed to improve programming there is seldom found a clear definition of articulation which is understandable to everyone.

Program articulation may be defined as the total effort of educational groups and individuals to discover, establish and continually improve relationships between policies, plans, procedures, programs and people.

Any reason for program articulation without consideration of people is weak and irrelevant. It is important that people (students) have the opportunity to progress smoothly from secondary to community college or to baccalaureate programs with minimum repetition and an absence of gaps in their total educational program.

Articulation cannot succeed without the commitment of those people serving in a leadership capacity. Things happen when people show a willingness to share ideans, plans and activities. But, herein lies the problem and is the reason that effective articulation is difficult to achieve. Sharing of ideas, plans and activities in education requires a disciplined commitment to understand other organizations and individuals rather than merely promoting one's own professional interest, agency or organization. This is one of the most critical aspects of the articulation process.

Some important factors which enhance the success of program articulation are:

- When there are clearly defined problems and articulation groups agree to work on them.

- When problems considered are large enough and of enough genuine concern to command cooperative effort.

- When groups or individuals can agree on specific responsibilities.

- When each group or individual understands something of the other's purposes, programs, resources, limitations and commitments.

- When cooperating groups believe something can be done about articulation.

Any formal design suggested or imposed by the State Board of Education will have little or no chance of success without commitment of educational leaders at the local level. A system which attempts to develop program articulation and which is planned by someone external to the institutions or agencies involved almost certainly will be ineffective. Institutional roles can best be determined locally by those involved in the day to day operations.

CHAPTER II

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Inadequacies in the present education organizational structure pose a major barrier to achieving programs that are comprehensive, cohesive, continuous and relevant to all people in Michigan. These inadequacies are emphasized in the 42 area vocational studies which encompass the entire State. The studies revealed an almost complete lack of joint planning among local educational agencies providing vocational-technical education programs. This lack of planning and coordination is particularly evident among secondary school districts and between community colleges and secondary schools. This has been a serious deterrent in providing effective program coordination and articulation.

The area studies strongly suggested that efforts be made to use facilities more effectively through shared-time programs and joint use of facilities by K-12 districts and community colleges. This would also provide students with additional options for enrolling in occupational programs.

While these studies focused on problems concerning vocational education it is reasonable to assume that the same problems of communication, coordination and articulation exist in other educational disciplines as well. Because of the complexity of the problem and the need for finalizing action on continuous occupational education programs, this paper will not address the broad concerns of general education. It seems logical that the broader concerns be addressed in a separate document.

While steps have been taken during the past two years to provide for improved planning at the local level, much remains to be done in an organizational way in order to assure that available funds can be used in an effective and efficient manner. The present structure still does not adequately serve all people in the State, does not prevent duplication of effort within a geographical region, nor does it provide for a continuous curriculum approach to occupational education.

A wide range of conditions indicate the need for new ways of thinking about, organizing, and conducting the educational enterprise in order to respond more effectively to learners. Some of these conditions are:

1. Duplication of learning experiences and overlapping curricula in high schools, area centers and colleges waste time and money and often fail to challenge young people.

2. Performance objectives are required for all occupational codes in Michigan. This requires a different view of the function and relationship of educational sectors.

3. The increasing cost of education to students, parents and taxpayers makes improvement of articulation practices a necessity.

4. Development of secondary area centers and the changing role of community colleges and some four-year institutions have emphasized the need for improved articulation in Michigan.

5. Present facilities and delivery systems do not provide sufficient educational alternatives to students.

6. There is no mechanism which will provide a uniform effort by Department of Education Services to assure horizontal and vertical coordination and articulation among educational agencies.

CHAPTER III

CURRENT CAPABILITIES

Current Procedures:

Reference will be made here to the responsibilities of the State Board of Education and the Vocational-Technical Education Service, for approval of programs at the secondary and postsecondary levels. These program approvals are necessary in order to determine eligibility for both state and federal vocational funding. Other responsibilities for adult vocational programming are vested in the Adult and Continuing Education Service.

Secondary Program Approval Responsibilities:

The Michigan Department of Education, Vocational-Technical Education Service has been designated as the recipient of certain state and federal categorically earmarked funds. These funds are available to local educational agencies and are designed to assist in the preparation of funding of vocational education programs which prepare high school youth with entry level salable skills. It is the responsibility of the Vocational-Technical Education Service to develop the rules and regulations, policies and procedures for the dissemination of these funds. The two main sources of funding are the Federal Vocational Education Act of 1963, as amended, and vocational education added cost funds appropriated in the State School Aid Act. An approval process detailing the responsibility of the Michigan Department of Education has been developed in great detail.

The State of Michigan has been divided into 49 Career Education Planning Districts (CEPD) in order to better coordinate the vocational-technical education programs within a designated region. The CEPDs, utilizing various advisory councils working cooperatively with all K-12 districts and community colleges each develop a plan for providing vocational-technical education within the CEPD. This plan is submitted to the Michigan Department of Education annually. Funding from state and federal sources is available only for those programs, projects and activities included in the CEPD Plan.

Community College Program Approval Responsibilities:

In creating the State Board of Education, the 1963 Constitution prescribed that the Board "shall serve as the general planning and

coordinating body for all public education, including higher education, and shall advise the Legislature as to the financial requirements in connection therewith."

Furthermore, the State Board shall provide leadership and general supervision over all public education, including adult education and instructional programs in public community colleges, but not in public baccalaureate institutions.[1] In addition, the 1963 Constitution stipulates that "the Legislature shall provide by law for a State Board for Public Community and Junior Colleges, which shall advise the State Board of Education concerning general supervision and planning for such colleges and requests for annual appropriations for their support.

In fulfillment of this responsibility, the Postsecondary Unit of the Vocational-Technical Education Service annually disseminates program application forms to Michigan's 29 public community colleges for collection of new occupational education program proposals. The Postsecondary Unit reviews, evaluates and prepares recommendations relative to each proposal. The recommendations are transmitted to the State Board for Public Community and Junior Colleges for review. The recommendations are then forwarded to the State Board of Education for final action. The action of the State Board of Education is forwarded to the state Legislature and the Executive Office of the Governor in fulfilling their constitutional responsibility.

Each occupational program, be it one or two year certificate or associate degree, contains certain courses which meet the criteria and are thus eligible for federal vocational education funds. The course or courses are approved and recorded in the Community College Occupational Program and Course Taxonomy. Thus, when colleges offer courses and request financial remuneration, funds are made available to them.

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1. Consitution of the State of Michigan, 1963, Article VIII, Section 3.

The planning process which takes place locally within the 49 Career Education Planning Districts is designed to include both secondary and postsecondary program planning. However, there is still a reluctance on the part of some community colleges to become involved in the planning process and currently private occupational schools and private postsecondary institutions are not involved. Various procedures are being proposed to bring about more coordination which should eventually result in programs in each of the occupational codes at all levels.

Secondary Area Vocational Centers:

The area program concept is being implemented in Michigan and will eventually expand opportunities for occupational education to all secondary students in the State. Development of the area centers requires considerable coordination and planning on the part of all K-12 districts within the designated area. In addition, the State Board of Education requires the involvement of existing community colleges within the area in the total planning process. Where centers have been planned, developed, constructed and are currently in operation there is substantial evidence that program articulation is taking place. This is particularly true in Calhoun County where administrators and faculty members of Kellogg Community College and the Calhoun Area Center are developing a model for a continuous occupational curriculum. Two additional demonstration projects are needed to assess replicability. One would involve a metropolitan area served by more than one community and the second a more sparsely populated area in the northern part of the State. The model and details learned from the Calhoun project could be incorporated in the two additional projects.

Program Planning at the Regional Level:

Goal 19 of the State Plan for Higher Education in Michigan reads as follows:

> As a matter of policy, the State Board of Education will, from time to time, recommend that certain community colleges, especially metropolitan colleges, undertake such of the high cost vocational-technical programs as they are particularly suited to offer.

There are some technical programs that should be available to all students in the State which should not be offered in every community college because of high costs, limited enrollments and limited job opportunities for those completing the programs. Specialized programs

such as agricultural technology, cement technology, maritime technology and nuclear medical technology are examples of such programs being offered in a limited number of institutions. Therefore, there is a need for voluntary regional planning for the delivery of these programs among community colleges. Baccalaureate institutions and private occupational schools which are providing occupational or other programs of two years or less duration should also be included in the regional planning process.

Staff members in the Vocational-Technical Education Service are working with several community colleges in the development of regional planning consortia to bring about more efficient and effective programming for those high cost programs, especially in the metropolitan areas of the State.

CHAPTER IV

PROCEDURES FOR IMPROVING

COORDINATION AND ARTICULATION

Among K-12 Districts and Area Centers:

Much has been accomplished in the past two years toward improved coordination and articulation among K-12 districts through the CEPD concept. These 49 Planning Districts were developed after studies revealed that little or no program planning transpired among K-12 districts within a county or intermediate school district.

In the development of the concept each district was urged to appoint a coordinator and a coordinating council. Council membership consists of representatives from each K-12 district, community college or other educational institution. In addition, lay persons interested in vocational education have been included as council members in several CEPDs. The role of the coordinating councils has been defined as follows:

1. To assist in the determination of the total career preparation needs for the CEPD.

2. To assist in the formulation of objectives for career preparation for the CEPD.

3. To assist in determining the need for the methods of gathering data for the CEPD. To assist in the interpretation of such data.

4. To assist in seeking needed local, state and national action to assure high quality career preparation in the CEPD.

5. To assist in interpreting programs for career preparation to the public and enlist their support in seeking improvements.

6. To assist in authorizing and directing of special Ad Hoc Committees as needed in the development, implementation and articulation of career preparation programs in the CEPD.

7. To assist educational agencies in the development of policy relating to career preparation at all levels.

8. To assist in the formulation of recommendations and the implementation of action programs to meet the total career preparation needs of the CEPD.

9. To assist in the continuous evaluation of career preparation programs in the CEPD.

In most of the 49 Districts good progress has been made in improved articulation so far as shared-time programming, more effective use of facilities and new program coordination are concerned. Educational leaders have used this concept to more effectively plan appropriate, relevant programs designed to provide more occupational training for high school students. Horizontal program articulation has in fact taken place in significant proportion among the K-12 districts and existing area centers within the CEPDs. Despite encouraging signs of cooperation and coordination during this short period of time there is also evidence that full cooperation does not yet exist throughout the State.

Public Act No. 97 which was approved by the Governor on May 7, 1974 will promote the planning and development of career education programs. It will also prescribe the powers and duties of the planning councils in relation to career education and vocational education. This could provide the impetus for improved program articulation at all levels.

Between Secondary Schools, Community Colleges and Private Institutions:

Every effort should be made to make the movement from the high school to the community college and four-year college as easy as possible for the student. Articulation like education should go on continuously, both formally and informally at all levels in an effort to avoid unnecessary duplication and to complement the efforts of others.

The above statements would no doubt be strongly endorsed by educators at all levels. Unfortunately, there are many areas in Michigan where planned program articulation from secondary schools to community colleges is virtually non-existent.

In some instances the relationship between vocational education directors and their institutions and occupational deans and their institutions is such that communications and coordination efforts are lacking or minimal. In other cases the relationship is good, but any effort toward program articulation has not yet had the attention it deserves.

Institutional barriers to education such as time blocks, grades, general education requirements, graduation and credits often times are backed by long tradition and change is often resisted. Professional jealousies or other similar factors have often inhibited the educational process which makes it difficult for students to move upward in an efficient manner.

A most important and fundamental concept of curriculum articulation and transitional planning is to design program systems which address the product description in output (performance objectives) terms for the student. Programs and courses must be defined according to what the student should be able to do, not by credit, seat time, courses taken or textbooks used. Certificates, diplomas and degrees always equate to credit hours generated. School officials focus on process descriptions such as teacher certification, textbook used, courses taken, etc., when they should be focusing on performance. When a student graduates from high school, it is because he has taken a series of courses instead of what he can do.

It is suggested that all students might receive written evidence of performance objectives achieved from his/her instructor at the termination of the program. This evidence may be presented to any institution where a similar or advanced program is being conducted. This evidence could show that students qualify for an advanced placement test. The student may then proceed with advanced instruction at the point of skills he has achieved.

Greater effort must be made to assure improved relationships between private and public institutions at all levels to provide for movement of persons between and among these institutions.

Consideration must be given to existing occupational programs in private schools when establishing new program offerings in public institutions at all levels. Currently the Vocational-Technical Education Service has provisions for secondary and postsecondary institutions to contract with private occupational schools to provide vocational programs where the cost is less than or equal to the public school cost and where equipment or services are not readily available in public institutions. Courses offered by private institutions will have the same occupational code and the same minimum performance objectives as those offered in public institutions.

In addition, the enrollment, completions and placement of individuals from the private sector should be considered in planning for educational programs at all levels of the public educational spectrum.

In order to encourage improved articulation between secondary schools, private institutions, and community colleges, the following recommendations are made:

A. By September 1, 1976 all Intermediate, K-12 Districts and Community Colleges will submit a plan of articulation including an agreement to the State Board of Education for review and approval as a part of the comprehensive career education plan.

B. It is recommended that two CEPD-wide demonstration projects in program articulation be funded through the Legislature. The purpose would be to demonstrate that K-12 districts, area centers and community colleges can effectively bring about articulation at the local level. One project would involve a metropolitan area of the State and the second project would encompass an area in the northern part of the State. Total cost of these projects would not exceed $150,000 per year for a period of two years.

C. Institutional role statements for K-12 districts, area centers, community colleges and four-year colleges and private schools offering occupational programs need to be developed and agreed upon by each local agency and the State Board of Education. These roles might vary depending upon the geographical area of the State and by the number and kind of institutions.

D. It is recommended that legislation be developed which would provide for an area delivery system plan for adult non credit vocational education services which would include as signatories all agencies involved in providing adult services.

E. Efforts should continue toward the reorganization of community college districts so that their district boundaries will coincide with K-12 districts and whenever possible be coterminous with intermediate school districts.

F. Increased emphasis should be given within the State Department of Education to ensure a uniform effort on the part of the various Services to encourage and enhance horizontal and vertical coordination and articulation among educational agencies. Associate Superintendents would be charged with developing a suitable mechanism to accomplish this task.

Between Community Colleges and Baccalaureate Institutions:

The problems of articulation between community colleges and baccalaureate institutions are different than the problems between the K-12 districts and postsecondary institutions. These problems include difficulties in the areas of admissions, transfer of credits and acceptance of course equivalencies, and variances in grading practices, as well as the problems in program articulation discussed above.

Many of the colleges and universities, and community colleges, have adopted an agreement providing guidelines on transfer students proposed by the Michigan Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (MACRAO). These agreements provide that students who complete an associate degree at a public community college have fulfilled the first two years' requirements of a baccalaureate degree. The intent of the MACRAO agreements is to provide for the continuation of the

student's education without the needless duplication of courses which he has already completed.

Although the MACRAC agreements are a valuable first step in the articulation process, a number of serious problems remain:

1. Students transferring without having completed all of the requirements of an associate degree are not covered by the agreement.

2. Not all institutions have yet signed the agreement. Thus, many students are not covered.

3. Students in occupational programs, even with completion of associate degree requirements, are not covered in the MACRAO agreements, even though a substantial proportion may ultimately pursue a four-year degree.

4. Although institutions may agree to accept credits upon transfer, often individual courses may not be accepted because of variations of course content, or because the senior institution may offer the course at the junior or senior level. Thus a student may still be required to repeat courses he has already completed, even under the MACRAO guidelines.

5. The MACRAO agreements do not address the situation of the considerable number of students who transfer from a four-year institution to the community college.

6. Even though the MACRAO agreements may provide for the acceptance of all credits they do not cover residency requirements.

It is significant that the Michigan Legislature has taken action to assure improved coordination among community colleges and baccalaureate institutions. Section 19 of P.A. 227, Public Acts of 1974, College and University Appropriations Act for 1974-75 speaks to the planning procedure as follows:

> Sec. 19. In order that the appropriations committees may evaluate annual higher education budget needs in Michigan the public colleges and universities shall cooperatively develop a proposal for coordinated statewide coverage of public higher education programs and services including off-campus instruction, extension courses, and continuing education services, which are not in conflict with community college programs and services. This proposal shall be submitted to the senate and house appropriations committees of the legislature not later than February 15, 1975.

The proposal currently being prepared by the Council of State College Presidents is not required to speak to coordination or interacting to courses or programs being provided at the present time.

It seems feasible that admissions officers, registrars and department heads of the various community colleges and baccalaureate institutions should work together for purposes of defining adequacy of existing courses and transferability of credits from one institution to another.

On a regional basis, community college and baccalaureate institutions' officials could begin the process of defining transferability between the institutions. It is not the intent of the State Board of Education to inhibit the colleges from engaging in this process on a statewide basis. However, this plan reflects the regional university concept and would be coterminous with community college boundaries.

In the area of program articulation, a number of institutions have developed "2 plus 2" programs, establishing a sequence whereby students in a two year community college occupational program are provided a path to complete the final two years of a baccalaureate degree. Not all of the four-year institutions provide this option, however, and many students in community college occupational programs must effectively start over in their postsecondary education, should they decide to go on for a baccalaureate degree.

In its desire to facilitate program articulation and coordination between community colleges and four-year institutions, the State Community and Junior College Board has encouraged participation of all institutions as signatories to the proposal of the MACRAO.

In order to provide for improved articulation between community colleges and baccalaureate institutions, the following recommendations are made:

A. It is recommended that four-year institutions be involved in the CEPD-wide demonstration projects proposed above, with the purpose of encouraging development of program articulation on occupational programs at the postsecondary level.

B. The scope of the MACRAO agreements should be extended to provide guidelines on the transfer of students in occupational programs.

C. The MACRAO should be invited to establish guidelines on equating various types of grading systems for evaluation of student transcripts upon transfer from one institution to another.

D. Section 19 of Public Act 227, Public Acts of 1974 should be amended to include such items as competency examinations, transferability of credits, course equivalency tables or other practices which will prevent needless duplication of time and money. The amendment should provide that coordination be done on a regional basis and that annual proposals be submitted to the Legislature and the State Board of Education.

E. The Legislature should be requested to fund a study analyzing the transfer of courses and credits for occupational students from public community colleges to public baccalaureate institutions. The purpose of the analysis would be to determine the cost to the State and to the student of institutional policies which result in a student having to repeat courses already completed at another State institution. One-time cost of such a study is estimated at $35,180 for two professional and one clerical staff persons for six months, or equivalent consultant services.

F. It is recommended that Act No. 97 of the Public Acts of 1974, the Career Education Act, be amended to include postsecondary education and provide for equitable representation in the planning and development of career education programs.

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